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BLOWN UP FOR NOTHING.

AN erudite German, with whom I and three other ex-school-boys were living in order to receive our last coat of educational paint, was away in England pupil-gleaning during the midsummer vacation. Meanwhile, we developed the resources of the 'green Neckar,' which rippled Rhineward just under our windows, and cooled that sun-warmed lizards' home, the garden-wall. Boating, bathing, fishing, sketching, we spent six idle weeks of summer.

Reading was reduced to the minimum, though, to be sure, the occasional perusal of a *Wirthshaus* wine-list—to which we confined ourselves—might be called hard reading with propriety. Ours, however, was the national energetic idleness, not the mere basking indolence of German students, who, lolling in characteristically clumsy punts, floated down their lovely river, and lazily 'chaffed' on seeing us, hot and coatless, pulling our English boat up-stream towards some distant *Dorf*.

We were proud of that boat, and paid *Gulden* for its guarding to the ugly proprietor of a neighbouring ferry, a peerless knave in his way. Large disbursements were also made to fishermen, who, at the risk of their lives, according to them, snatched the *Engländerin* out of mill-wheels, towards which she frequently drifted. It was remarkable that whenever there was a depression in the fish-trade, she invariably broke loose from her moorings, and was gallantly saved by these noble fellows from dangerous weirs, and rocks, and bridge-piers. But as even a flesh-and-blood heroine cannot undergo oft-recurring 'rescues' without her nerves becoming slightly shattered, we were more distressed than surprised to find that our boat, weakened by constant trouble, would sometimes 'give way' in a manner painful to witness. She wept inwardly; in fact, she leaked.

'Where go you hence to-day morning, my sirs?' the jocund Frau Völler, presiding at breakfast, would ask in her own sonorous language. As a tribute to amiability, we used to consult the love-worthy housewife with regard to our daily excursions, and she generally suggested that we should

visit one of two refreshment-châteaux on the mountain near—places in her eyes replete with every delight.

Dear woman! she did not much favour the Neckar expeditions—an economical inkling that rowing increased English appetites, was combined with a certain dread that appetites and their owners might some day perish together. As, on our return from boating-trips, she usually found that at least one of the party had, from accident or navigating necessity, been overboard, her fears were not unreasonable.

But Alfred Ditton was our recognised director, on the strength of his having got through one-fifth of a century—'made a score off old Time,' was his cricketering metaphor. 'We'll pull up to the *Trauben*' (a distant river-side inn), he one day proposed; 'dine there at the expense of Bowes, and drift back *im Dunkeln*.' This plan met with unqualified approval from the majority—the minority (Bowes) merely remarking in idiomatic phraseology, to which he was given, that our captain was ein *kühles Thier*—a cool beast.

We arranged to start at twelve. 'Dare we the honour of your company beg?' inquired Ditton, addressing the Frau Professorin—an invitation we never omitted.

'Thank you fine, worthy sir,' she laughed out; 'think I not. If I in your little ship to sit were, then would I quite certainly outpitched be. And comes not also the water therein?'

'Ah! that puts me in mind,' said Ditton, reverting to English, and turning to me. 'Cobwebs, go to your duty.'

My surname is *Webb*—my duty consisted in going out, previously to a long row, to look over and carefully calk the defective seams of our boat—a branch of the shipwright's craft in which I was supposed to excel my companions. Stripping off my coat, and collecting tools, I obediently set out.

'Make her tight—there's a good fellow,' said Ditton, reducing the dislocations of a fly-rod in the hall. 'Don't let that blockhead Karl interfere. I'm going up a little way to fish.'

It was one of those heart-lighting days that

impel men to say 'Good-morning' to people they don't know—that make all objects which emit sound, musical. An awful gendarme, marching to report himself at the next town, burst into song as I passed, while 'baling out' his heavy helmet. On reaching the ferry, I found our boat inverted on the bank, and, like a workman, commenced my toil by sitting down for a while.

Tree-covered mountains rose high above me, and from dense foliage on the sides of one emerged a castle, which must have been stormed and battered by some artist corps in a long disbanded army—its ruin had been so considerably accomplished. Under it—protected by it, alas! no longer—lay a red-roofed town, rich in churches, and colour, and quiet.

The cool, bright Neckar glided at my feet, glittering like a harlequin's silvered wand, and, like it, reversing a magic scene. It is a river that can scarcely be called navigable, though huge barges, with blunted prows, high sides, and great square sails—resembling ungilt Roman galleys, make a difficult but stately progress up its course, towed by many straining horses, whose shining ridges of tightened muscle may be traced sloping over their mighty quarters, 'as slopes the wild brook o'er a little stone, running too furiously to break upon it.'

Brown rocks jut out far into the water, which rushes in impatient swirls between them; and massive boulders, here and there, lie just concealed beneath the surface. On these, deep-laden, returning barges speeding down the rapids—quite independent of sails or horses—strike, and stick fast until pushed off by their musically imprecating crews. Against these, also, crash long sinuous rafts, darting with the stream—their hasty passage little retarded by all the poles and energy of the high-boated, struggling men upon them. Even our boat, with a draught of four inches, often became a temporary fixture in its excursions, until one of its owners, selected by means of a spun *Kreuzer*, would go overboard and effect her relaunch.

Some engineer, who probably looked upon the picturesque river as nothing but an ill-constructed canal, undertook to remove a few of the many obstacles which impeded navigation; and at intervals through the summer of which I write, men had been employed, standing up to their waists in water, laboriously dinting holes in the rocks for the purpose of blasting. We had grown quite accustomed to the ringing noise of their steel tools, and to the frequent explosions, as great pieces of shattered boulders burst from the troubled stream and rose in the air.

Not seeing men at work this morning, I concluded that they were soaking internally at the *White Bear*, instead of externally in the green Neckar.

'Must not sit here listening to your chattering any longer,' thought I, to my river of rivers; 'you can talk to me while I work;' and 'unlaying' a piece of rope, I began to pay the opened seams of our gallant but much-tried vessel, carefully stuffing and tapping the tow into all suspicious chinks, and then applying tar to them—waterproofing my hands in the process with that sticky extraction.

I was just breathing the low whistle of satisfactory progress—'Will you so good be?'—said a voice near me. I looked hastily up, for the unfinished German sentence had not a guttural in it. 'Will you so good be?'—repeated a young English girl on the bank. Clear complexioned, crisply dressed, neatly booted—there was no mistaking her for a *Deutsches Fraulein*. With an instant hatred of my companions, for whose sake I stood there in a pair of shrunken, tar-stained, cricketing trousers, and a collarless flannel shirt, I upset rather than lifted my hat from my head.

'Can you, will you?'—The pretty speaker's knowledge of German was exhausted.

'Yes?' said I interrogatively, in my own language, lengthening the short word as politely as I could, having nothing else to remark.

That the girl had taken me for one of those confounded boatmen, was evident; worse still, she appeared more confused than delighted at meeting with a compatriot.

'Oh, can you tell me, please, where the ferryman may be found?' she nervously said. 'I want to cross the river.'

'Where is then the Karl?' I called to the mother of that absent boatowner, who stood within hail at her cottage-door.

'The Karl, my sir? He is since two hours with many student gentlemen in his boat down the Neckar away gone,' the goitred lady resounded; 'and Johann, believe I, is to the town thereover walked, his little fish to sell.'

'They've all quietly left the ferry to take care of itself,' I told my countrywoman. 'If you will allow me to be Karl's deputy; his smallest boat is there; do you mind venturing in it? I am afraid that I can't get my own one into the water alone—and it's all over tar,' I added, as an adroit apology for my being in the same condition.

Wading a pace or two, I was able to draw in the fishing-punt, which was anchored by a stone. 'You need not be afraid, though it seems lightly built,' said I, holding it for her to step into; 'I'm used to them, and will take great care.'

'But I don't like giving you such trouble, and you have got so wet,' lamented my passenger, taking her seat after some hesitation. 'I only want to be landed on the great rock nearly opposite, to sketch that grand old castle. It *must* look well from there.' She carried a drawing-book and a tin-box of colours in a strap.

Since the time when blockhead Karl nailed together the three planks of which it was built, his frail punt had been never so richly laden as now. Calling all the waterman in my composition to the service, I pushed off, and shot away from the bank.

As the girl divined that she would be unable to tender me the ferry *Groschen*, she paid my exertions with conversation. 'We have only been here a few days,' she told me, 'and are leaving to-morrow; so I was anxious to make a sketch, as a memento of this beautiful place.'

Before reaching the middle of the river, I became devotedly attached to the sweet occupant of the punt, which now appeared to me a perfect wagger-boat, so cruelly fast it sped to its destination. Arrived at the end of a too short voyage, I was desperately in love (*etate* sud nineteen).

The top of the rock was much above the water, and could not be easily mounted, but its extending base formed a flat surface at one side, on which we landed. The higher part prevented our seeing the

bridge and a portion of the river, but allowed a capital view to be obtained of the castle and town.

I lifted out the ferryman's hole-bored box in which he kept his fish alive (when industrious enough to catch any), and placed it as a seat for the artist, holding the punt—far more anxious than I to depart—while doing so. After filling a little glass with water for the paints, and being repeatedly thanked, I at last reluctantly took my leave.

'Will you kindly ask Karl to come across for me when he returns?' said the girl, as I allowed the ruthless stream to bear me away from her.

'Certainly,' I called aloud; but 'Certainly not,' I inwardly said. 'Karl, indeed, in the same boat with that angel! Karl! a dirty rascal!'—My eyes fell on the abominable tar-stained cricketer trousers, and vituperation ended in a moan.

On reaching the shore, I fell again to my work; but calking had lost its charms. Idly seated astride on the boat, I kept glancing at the distant girl, whenever she bent over her drawing; and when she raised her eyes to the castle, I looked downwards, lest I might seem to watch her, and abstractedly dipping a stick into the pot of tar beside me, tried to paint her lovely face in that somewhat troublesome 'vehicle' on the bottom of our now neglected skiff. Thoughts took a gloomy cast. 'Going away to-morrow,' she had said. 'I shall never see that bright being again,' and I drearily looked about me for a horizon—a great aid to melancholy. Turning round with yearning gaze, I had just found the requisite sky-touched line, when a quickly-moving boat, vigorously propelled by two men, interrupted my view of it.

'Look out!' they shouted to me, as they neared the bank. A glance at the river, and I saw some smoke curling from a tube which shewed above the surface not twenty yards below the spot where the English girl sat and drew.

'Stay you still! Where go you then? You will dead-struck be!' yelled the engineer's men as I drove Karl's narrow punt through the water till it rushed in over the bows.

(A boulder in mid-stream had been evidently bored for blasting on the previous day, and they, not seeing the tenant of the neighbouring rock, had now inserted the canister of powder, and lighted the fuse which reached down to it.)

'If that fuse will last as they sometimes do, we may get out of harm's way before the explosion,' I thought, calling out at the same time: 'Jump in quick when I pass.' Much alarmed, the girl came to the edge of the rock, and then for the first time saw the tube. I was only three boat's-length from her; the stream was deep there, and flowed rapidly against me; down I drove the propelling pole into the river-bed, holding it by the extreme end, and following it with my arms in the water to obtain a better purchase for each push. Caught by the spike in a cleft, it drew out of my hand, and in an instant the punt was borne back by the current. 'She must be killed by the falling stones!' I cried in despair, every instant expecting the 'bang.' One chance: snatching off my hat, and using it paddlewise, I dashed it again and again into the water, urging the boat on to the fuse, towards which it drifted. 'Pulled from the rock, it will lose effect.' The smoke rose in my face as I reached for and seized the tube. It was horribly hot. A tug.—Hrrr *wush!* Boat and I seemed travelling skyward, as if shot up by a water-charged cannon.

Then I positively found my dear old Neckar deliberately drowning me, in the coolest manner imaginable.

My recollection of the rest of the day is as imperfect as that of a bribed voter before an election committee. I believe some one remarked, 'Donner-wetter!' and then pulled my hair. I am under the impression that the calking was not finished, nor the *Trauben* visited, and I have an indistinct remembrance of hot brandy and water.

'O fortunate senex! Lucky old brute!' Bowes, who stood by the side of my bed, was not choice in his selection of appellatives.

'Nice welcome to a resuscitated companion!' I thought; 'has the fellow a reversionary interest in my hunting-watch?'—'Lucky! how would you like to burn your fingers like that?' I said savagely, producing my left hand, which I found done up in cotton-wool like a new scarf-pin.

'How should I like to have an—an—awfully jolly' (he tried to render this in German, and, for a wonder, failed) 'girl asking after me every ten minutes for twelve hours or so?' replied he.

A brilliant light burst on me, as the flash of a policeman's bull's-eye on an intoxicated person lying in the road. 'Did she?' I asked solemnly.

'A little small!' replied Bowes in his favourite tongue assuringly.

'Tell me about it all,' said I, in a self-satisfied tone; and my good-natured but inconsiderate nurse at once sat down on my legs, and began. 'Well, *allerliebste Freund*, I was looking out of window' (an earnest of future veracity—Bowes, when indoors, always *was* looking out of window), 'and heard a lot of *Deutschers* shouting. Then came Ditton running down the bank *comme un cheval de trois ans*' (the speaker's periphrasis for a 'three-year old'). 'Before I could get over the balcony, he pitched head first into the Neckar, as if he'd got a lighted box of Vesuvians in his coat-pocket, and wanted to put himself out. Off he swam—you know the funny way Ditton swims—like a quill-float with a "bite"—bobbing up and down.—He can't have gone in after that "hat," I thought—but there seemed nothing else to be picked up on the surface; then he made a last bob, and went under. I'd got out a boat, and was half-way across the river, when I saw two fellows lugging you and him into their punt.—Now,' continued Bowes (with a slight relapse into what we termed his Babel-mixture), '*ich bin nicht gern verkauft*' (I don't like being sold); 'and when a fellow actually gets into a perspiration with the intention of saving human life, and can't find any human life to save, it's vexing; so, as I looked about for *something* to be gallant over, *Donner und Blitzen!* what saw I but *ein wunderschönes* English girl standing on a desolate rock, with her hands clasped despairingly, like Andromeda, in a straw-hat. Rushed away, and saved her instantly. Would you believe it, Cobwebs, all the time I was doing so she never once exclaimed: "My preserver!" or "Noble-hearted stranger!" or fainted in my arms, or did anything regulation, but sat at the end of the boat staring after Ditton and you—two fellows looking as if they'd just been hanged, in the rain,' ended Bowes disgustfully.

'And she asked after me, did she really, old fellow?' I again inquired, with a wondrous inward feeling of joy.

'*Ich versichere Dich*—had to run up and down

stairs without my boots to tell her every time you snored all through the afternoon.'

'O Bowes,' I remonstrated, 'you said "breathing stertorously," not *snoring*, I hope?'

'Afraid it was "snore," Webb,' he confessed penitently. 'I'm so truthful, you know.'

Was he?

It seemed, from the various accounts, that although an unusually large charge had been placed in the cavity of the boulder, yet my having raised the canister half-way out of it had fortunately spoiled the effect of the blast; but the upward burst of water had blown Karl's punt to pieces, and me into the air. Ditton, who was fishing some distance away from the spot, had run and swum to where he saw me sink—had dived, and brought me to the surface. We were then rescued by boatmen.

A good deal of mutual thanking took place: Helen Watson thanked me; I thanked Ditton; she thanked Ditton (which I could not help thinking rather unnecessary, as that was clearly *my* business—and he was very susceptible). Her brother and sister-in-law, with whom she was travelling, thanked every one they could, and paid the others—not being conversant with German, but quite understanding the 'voicefulness' of Gulden.

'Good-bye, Mr Webb; you must come to Hertfordshire on your return home. I shall never forget what'—

Well, all that need not be repeated; but when the tremulous voice ceased, and the sweet girl took leave of me, I experienced the same difficulty in keeping off my knees that a London cab-horse does in frosty weather.

The wildest of the fancies indulged in while calking our boat on the eventful day seemed now realised. Of *course*, she would marry me. All the three-volume works treating of salvage I had ever read, distinctly shewed that if a man carried a woman down a ladder from a blazing window, or stopped her runaway horse, or rescued her from a watery grave, she *must* ultimately marry him. 'To be sure, if that rock *had* been thoroughly blasted, the fragments might not have fallen *exactly* where she'— Banish the unpleasant thought!

'Glad, though, I did not propose to her; it would have seemed like taking advantage of her grateful feelings towards me,' I said to myself complacently.

Two years would soon pass; I should then be twenty-one. My father had often expressed a high opinion of the '*settling* effect' (his somewhat ill-chosen phrase) of an early marriage. Prospects were bright indeed.

I was one of the first of the professor's pupils who returned to England. My stopping with him was utterly useless; saturated as my mind was with the torrent of early love, his educational paint *would* 'run,' however thickly or skilfully laid on.

One day, before leaving, I rose very early, under the pretext of a bathe, and surreptitiously swimming across to my rock—the rock—incribed upon its surface the initials H. W., intertwined with my own. We would visit the spot on our bridal tour. Having often inveighed against the practice of name-carving, I congratulated myself on performing the labour of love unobserved. But no.—'I was looking out of window this morning,' began Bowes agreeably at breakfast, 'and *ich bin geblesen*' (his Teutonic version of the vulgar idiom, 'I'm blowed')

'if I didn't see old Cobwebs sitting on the rock opposite, in a state of nudity, working away with a knife, like an early Briton opening oysters.' . . .

Arrived at home, I took a headlong plunge into the vortex of business, to bring up figurative pearls for my affianced—well, perhaps not affianced, but—my *bride-designate*, I might venture to call her.

'How hard the lad does work, to be sure!' said my surprised and delighted father, who was unaware of the cause for exertion. He positively began to waver in his allegiance to the early-marriage theory, I appeared to him so steadily inclined. That, of course, did not suit my views at all, so I reinstated him in his former opinions by stopping out late two nights together, and being musical on the stairs when I returned to the paternal roof.

The winter passed in toil and hope. I would go down to Hertfordshire in May. May arrived, and I wrote to Helen's brother, asking myself to stay there, as he had desired me to do when in Germany. A very polite reply came from some deputy letter-opener—the Watsons were away for a summer's cruise in the Mediterranean. 'Must wait till Christmas-time to claim my bride,' I cheerfully said—'that's all!'

Hurrying one day down Upper Oxford Street, at the shopping-time, a tiny hand was put out from the wall of broughams which flanked the pavement, and a voice I first heard on the Neckar's bank said: 'Oh, Mr Webb, I am *so* delighted to meet you! We were *so* vexed to have been away yachting. We shall be *so* pleased!—' There was Helen.

An address was given me. I was entreated, in such charming entreaty, to call soon. Fred. (her brother, I presumed) was always talking about me, and wishing to see me again. Call soon!—Why, I had the greatest possible difficulty to refrain from hailing a Hansom, and following the carriage to its destination there and then; but I collected myself, and walked blithely on. Three ladies, side by side, proceeding to further expenditure, retarded my progress by blocking the footpath. I could not crush by them, nor would I step into the road, and dirty those boots, which perhaps had just lately reflected the fair—never mind. But, as I was saying, their dresses would not admit of my passing, and obliged me to walk behind them, and so overhear their conversation.

'Who was that shaking hands with you just now?' said one to the other.

'Oh, Helen Watson, you mean; a great ally of mine, and my dearest friend at school. I am to be one of her bridesmaids when she is married, which will be very soon, I fancy.'

'(Hope so,' said I to myself joyously; 'but what discernment girls have!')

'Who does she marry?' asked the first speaker.

'Why, it's rather a romantic match. Helen was abroad, and saw her *fiancé* jump into some German river and save a companion from drowning. She was greatly struck with his gallantry, and they fell in love with each other. He's a good-looking young man—one of the Dittons of Suffolk.' . . .

Noise near me started my stopped pulse. A gentleman was abusing the driver of a cab from which he had just alighted.

'What's the matter, William?' said a friendly policeman to the man as his 'fare' indignantly walked away.

'Matter!' he replied in a grieving tone. 'Vy, I've jest 'ad to hendure the werry greatest mortih-

cashun has hit's possible for a 'uman bein' to hundergo—I've bin *blown up for nothing!*

'So have I!' said a death-pale man, who took his seat in the cab. 'Drive hard, and pitch me out if you can!'

MODERN SAVAGES.

It is well known that a certain Savant and Explorer has been making notes for some time of the manners and customs of our 'wife-beaters,' our 'infant-killers,' our 'nose-and-ear biters,' our live-cat skimmers, and (perhaps) of our *Saturday Reviewers*, with the intention of printing the same, and exhibiting to the world a picture of the most savage and merciless people upon the earth's surface in the persons of our own fellow-countrymen; but it forms no part of our present object, notwithstanding the title of this paper, to anticipate that interesting work. We do but propose to set forth some of the national peculiarities, uninfluenced by civilisation and education, that still prevail among the wild tribes of the world, and which are not only interesting in themselves, but probably afford to us a tolerably faithful reflex of the mode of life pursued by our original ancestors, to our descent from whom, in as direct a line as possible, it is the object of all genealogy (a science despised by nobody but M. Dumas*) to approximate.

There is a vulgar opinion that savages are only the miserable remnants of nations that have once been civilised; but although this is doubtless the case in one or two instances, there is no scientific evidence to justify the assertion at large; while, if we compare the accounts of early travellers with the state of things known to be existing among out-of-the-way tribes, so far from any proof of degradation, where matters are not just as they were, they in all cases give signs of improvement. Where nations have receded, as in the case of the North American Indians, it is invariably to be attributed to contact with Europeans.

Thanks to Mr Fenimore Cooper and his charming novels, it is the North American Indian who is conjured up to most of our minds at the mention of the word Savage. We imagine a creature ruthless indeed against his enemies, but not without many noble characteristics; it is sad to have to confess that these only existed in the imagination of the author of *The Last of the Mohicans*. The affection between Uncas and his father is one of the most touching features of that remarkable book; yet, in all the Algonquin language, one of the richest in the country, there is no word for 'to love,' and when Elliot translated the Bible for them in 1661, he was obliged to coin one; and there was no word in the Timné tongue for 'beloved,' or even 'dear.' 'It is only fair to add,' says Sir John Lubbock (from whose admirable summary of this subject in his *Prehistoric Times* much of our information is gathered), 'that Kane found the Cree Indians *swearing* in French, having no oaths in their own language.'

Unhappily, this last evidence of morality is accounted for by the fact, that most of the

Indians have literally not enough religion 'to swear by.' The Dacotahs (to whom Uncas, by the by, belonged) never pray to the Creator; if they wish for fine weather, they pray to the weather itself, notwithstanding that they believe the Great Spirit made everything, 'except thunder and rice.' If the great test of the intelligence of a nation is, as some hold it to be, the progress and encouragement of Art, our Noble Savages attain but a very low standard. They object to sit for their portraits, because they conceive the likeness is achieved (as indeed it is with us) at the expense of the sitter. So much vitality, they argue, can only be put in the picture by withdrawing it from the original; and, moreover, if anything should subsequently happen to their portraits, they imagine that they will suffer too. 'But perhaps the oddest notion of all is recorded by Catlin. He excited great commotion among the Sioux by drawing one of their great chiefs in profile. "Why was half his face left out?" they asked; "Mahtocheega was never ashamed to look a white man in the face." Mahtocheega himself does not seem to have taken any offence, but Shonka, the Dog, took advantage of the idea to taunt him. "The Englishman knows," he said, "that you are but *half a man*; he has painted but one-half of your face, and knows that the rest is good for nothing." This view of the case led to a fight, in which poor Mahtocheega was shot; and as ill-luck would have it, the bullet by which he was killed tore away just that part of the face which had been omitted in the drawing. This was very unfortunate for Mr Catlin, who had great difficulty in making his escape, and lived some months after in fear for his life; nor was the matter settled until both Shonka and his brother had been killed, in revenge for the death of Mahtocheega.' A curious illustration of the proverb, *ars longa vita brevis*.

If portraiture is neglected, however, this cannot be said of the decoration of the person. Beside very elaborate tattooing, the most extraordinary alterations—all doubtless intended to be improvements—are effected in the limbs and features. The Easter Islanders enlarge their ears till they reach their shoulders; the Chinooks and other American tribes flatten their heads; the Chinese diminish their feet; the African tribes make saws of their teeth; the Nyambanas, a division of the Kaffirs, are characterised by a row of artificial pimples, or warts, about the size of a pea, and extending from the upper part of the forehead to the tip of the nose; the Bachassins who have distinguished themselves in battle are permitted to ornament their thighs with a scar, which is rendered indelible by means of wood-ashes rubbed into the fresh wound; while in Australia, some beautify themselves by horizontal scars, which extend across the upper part of the chest. These embellishments are at least an inch in diameter, and protrude half an inch from the body. In Tasmania, it is thought pretty to have a front tooth knocked out. The inhabitants of Tanna and Formosa, however, bear the bell away from all competitors in decoration; they have all over them elevated scars, representing plants, flowers, and constellations, which are painted in colours, and give the appearance of flowered damask!

But if art is only found in a very degraded state among savage tribes, science is not recognised at all. An examination of the numerals of thirty Australian languages evidences that none of them go beyond

* Your mother was a black woman, and your grandfather was an ape,' observed a French nobleman of ancient descent to dusky Dumas.

'Yes, sir, yes,' responded the unmoved novelist; 'my genealogy begins where yours appears to end.'

the number four; these 'Nature's noblemen,' as some would call them, therefore cannot count their own fingers—not even those on one hand. The inhabitants of King George's Sound were indeed imagined to be more advanced mathematicians, but on closer investigation it was discovered that their fifth numeral did but represent the word 'many.' The word 'five,' therefore, conveys to them only the idea of some vast vague number—such as 'myriads.' Dr Rae, whose partiality for the Esquimaux is well known, confesses that if a native is asked the number of his children, he is generally much puzzled; this, of course, may happen in the most civilised countries; but when the wife is asked, *she* also is equally nonplussed; and after much reckoning with their fingers, they give up the calculation as hopeless, although they may really only have four or five.

In order to limit this great subject as much as possible, Sir John Lubbock has culled his examples of *savage* life almost entirely from what he calls 'the non-metallic' races, the people whose only implements and weapons were (until the last three hundred years at furthest) of wood, or bone, or stone; but even where metals are known, in Central America, where the people are acquainted with the use of bronze; in North America, where they have copper hatchets, hammered into shape without the aid of fire; and even where the manufacture of iron is carried on, as among the Hottentots, the inhabitants are not superior to their savage brethren in other respects. The Hottentots, indeed, are among the most disgusting of all savages; the filthiest people, and almost the filthiest animals. 'Indeed, no species of mammal can be compared with them in this respect. Their bodies are covered with grease, and their hair loaded from day to day with such a quantity of soot and fat, and it gathers so much dust and other filth, which they leave to clot and harden on it, that it looks like a crust or cap of black mortar.' The skin which they wear over their backs, fastened in front, they carry as long as they live, and are buried in it; and for ornaments they wear rings of iron, copper, ivory, or leather, which last has the advantage of serving for food in bad times. It is questionable whether the total nudity of some of their non-iron-producing brethren is not to be preferred to such habits as these; and it is noticeable that even of their iron they make nothing but the heads of spears and assegais. So soon as any of their number grow too enfeebled for work, these agreeable people thrust him out of their society, and confine him in a solitary hut at a distance from their 'kraal,' to die of hunger. However badly our Poor-law is administered, this seems to outdo its worst even at the Whitechapel Union.

Among the Feejee Islanders, parricide is not a crime, but a custom, and the extinction of the surplus population is assented to by the victims themselves. Sometimes Paterfamilias suggests that his time is up; sometimes it is his family which take that unpleasant initiative. Upon one occasion, a young Feejee invited a missionary to attend his mother's funeral; the reverend gentleman, much astonished to perceive no corpse in the procession, made inquiries, as delicately as he could frame them, of the bereaved young man, who at once pointed out his mother, walking along as gay and lively as any of the party. The grave was dug about four feet by her

affectionate relatives; and after an affectionate parting, the poor old lady, still extraordinarily cheerful, was buried alive. During the first year of this missionary's residence at Somo-somo, there was only one instance of natural death; and when Captain Wilkes inquired for 'the old people' in a town numbering some hundreds of inhabitants all under forty years of age, he was informed that they were all buried. But the fact is in the case of the Feejeeans, they are actuated by the belief, not only in a future existence, but that as they leave this world, so they will rise again; they have therefore a powerful motive for quitting the world before they are weakened by old age; and they look with horror upon their neighbours, the Samoans, who do not bury people alive, as sceptical and irreligious.

Carelessness of human life is perhaps the most prominent characteristic of barbarism, notwithstanding that the living sometimes express regret for the departed. The widow of an Andaman Islander wears his skull by way of a jet necklace; and the Feejeeans themselves burn their skin into blisters, and cut off the end joints of the small toe and fifth finger, in order to express a decent sorrow. And yet these last-named people are not only cannibals, but epicures in human flesh. 'The greatest praise they can bestow upon any delicacy is to say it is as tender as a dead man.' They are so fastidious as to dislike the taste of white men (which is fortunate for the missionaries), to prefer the flesh of females to that of males, and to consider the arm above the elbow, and the thigh, as the best joints. They have no term for a corpse which does not signify something edible; and human flesh is known among them as 'long pig.' Slaves are fattened up for their great entertainments, and almost always roasted alive; and the chief of Raki-raki, who is very particular in his eating, is said to have devoured nine hundred persons himself, permitting no one (greedy dog!) to share them with him. It is to be observed that the Feejeeans have an immense abundance of provisions, and are therefore cannibals from choice. A mere gratification of the palate actuates them; but with the man-eating Maori, or New Zealander, such is by no means the case. The bodies which they prefer after a battle are not those of plump captive maidens, but of the most celebrated chiefs, no matter how old and dry. They believe that they thus appropriate to themselves, not only the material substance, but the spirit, ability, and glory of the person devoured; and, on the other hand, a Maori above all things dreads this fate, since his soul is hereby extinguished, and all his own advantages go to magnify his foe.

Other nations, again, are cannibals by compulsion; they have no positive objection to human food, any more than a sailor has to salt-meat, but they prefer other things, if they can get them. When the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, for example, quarrel, they have very literally 'a bone to pick' with one another after the contest; but they do not, as a general rule, devour their personal friends; yet, in severe winters, says Admiral Fitzroy, 'when they can obtain no other food, they take the oldest woman of their party, hold her head over a thick smoke made by burning green wood, and, pinching her throat, choke her;' after which she makes her appearance on the supper-table. When remonstrated with, and asked

why they did not rather kill their dogs, they answered briefly but to the purpose: 'Dogs catch *iappo*'—that is, otters. Conceive a lady of age and position being treated in that manner at a picnic (for instance), where the pigeon-pie has chanced to be forgotten—among ourselves!

Among the Sea Dyaks, it is thought a great compliment to a Departed friend to eat him, and some Brazilian tribes *drink* their Dead! 'About a month after the funeral, they disinter the corpse, which is then much decomposed, and put it in a great pan over the fire till all the volatile parts are driven off, leaving only (beside a most horrible odour) a black carbonaceous mass, which is pounded into a fine powder, mixed in large conches of caxiri, and drunk by the assembled company.' Indeed, in the complex ingenuity which savages display in doing nasty things, they have no equals except, perhaps, among our school-boys. Some of them—but by no means all—are clever with those fingers which they are not able to count. The Tahitians—but then they are the *crème de la crème* of savages—did wonderful things in the way of carpentering, although they knew so little of metals that they planted some nails in their gardens, thinking that they were shoots of some very hard wood; they felled trees with stone axes, and made fish-hooks of mother-of-pearl; they wove seine-nets of coarse bark, and made ropes and packthread out of the barks of trees; nay, they even manufactured cloth of three kinds from the paper-mulberry, the breadfruit-tree, and the fig. The Hottentots make baskets of plaited rushes which are perfectly water-tight. The West Australians throw javelins with accuracy and to a great distance by help of a handle of wood in a socket of bone; they use the boomerang; and they will dive into a river, spear in hand, and come up with a fish upon it. The South Sea Islander will pursue his finny prey beneath the coral rock, and rise to the surface with a finger in each of its eyes. The Esquimaux in his kayak will actually turn somersaults in the water. The Brazilian Indians shoot the turtle with arrows that fall from above it, since a direct aim would fail to penetrate the shell. But how little does all this go for in the scale of intelligence, when we remember that each of these acquirements is the sole result of the experience of a hundred generations, and all directed, with few exceptions, to the object of getting food. That attained, there is no attempt even at making it palatable. They actually prefer rotten meat and whale-flesh that is very high indeed. You may see the Australian savages eating their way into a stranded whale, and climbing in and out the stinking thing, choosing titbits. 'There is no sight,' says Captain Grey (and we can well believe him), 'more revolting than to see a young and gracefully formed native girl stepping into the carcass of a putrid whale'—literally, as we have it in the vernacular, 'walking into her food.' But even the very best of them—the Tahitians—are, as Sir John Lubbock observes, nothing else than children with the strength and passions of men. Their queen, Obeera, about forty years of age, was passionately fond of a doll presented to her by European visitors; and Tootahah, one of the great chiefs, got so jealous of her majesty in consequence, that they had to give *him* a doll likewise. Even this pattern nation has no word to express 'Thanks,' and no respect whatever for old age. The relations between the sexes are of the saddest kind, as is almost invariably the case with

savages; their general views upon this matter being concisely expressed by a certain Kandyan chief, who, 'perfectly scandalised at the utter barbarism of living with only one wife, and never parting until separated by death,' exclaimed: 'Why, that's just the wanderers'—which are monkeys.

As for the religious views of Savages, the Tahitians believe in the immortality of the soul, indeed, but imagine (with some of their betters) that heaven is reserved for chiefs, and some inferior locality for the common people. The Maoris, who are perpetually at war in this world, hope to find matters equally bellicose in the next; heaven being pictured by them as a place where they will be always victorious, and have continual feasts of fish and sweet-potatoes. They believe in a wicked spirit (though not in a good one) called Atoua, who is a cannibal like themselves, and when any one is ill, they suppose Atoua is devouring his inside.

'It has been asserted,' says Sir John Lubbock, 'over and over again, that there is no race of men so degraded as to be entirely without a religion—without some idea of a Deity. So far from this being true, the very reverse is the case.' The tribes in the lake districts of Central Africa 'admit neither god, nor angel, nor devil.' The Tasmanians have no word for a Creator. Many races have no idea of a good deity, but some vague fear of an evil being. It must be remembered that most travellers start with an impression that the folks they meet with, however strange, must have some spiritual notions, and are only convinced against their will; therefore their testimony upon this point is the more conclusive. Kolben, for instance, felt quite sure that certain dances in Kaffirland were of a religious character, 'let the Hottentots say what they will.' Dr Hooker allows that the Khasias (of India) have no religion whatsoever; and Colonel Yule, who maintains they have, admits that 'breaking hens' eggs is the principal part of their religious practice.

Upon the whole, it is impossible to come to any other conviction than that with which Sir John Lubbock concludes his most interesting essay. 'No doubt, different races of savages differ very much in character; but after making every possible allowance for them, it must, I think, be admitted that they are inferior, morally as well as in other respects, to the more civilised races. There is, indeed, no atrocious crime, no vice recorded by any traveller, which might not be paralleled in Europe, but that which is with us the exception, is with them the rule; that which with us is condemned by the general verdict of society, and is confined to the uneducated and the vicious, is among savages passed over almost without condemnation, and often treated as a matter of course.' As civilisation expands, it is certain that the world improves, and for the benefit of those who perversely stickle for leaving matters as they are, here is the proof. 'It is admitted, that if any animal increases in numbers it must be because the conditions are becoming more favourable for it; in other words, because it is happier and more comfortable. Let us apply this test to Man.' In the United States, in 1825 (excluding parts of Michigan and Illinois), there were 97,000 Indians, occupying 77,000,000 acres—120,312 square miles. This gives one inhabitant to every one and a quarter square miles! And yet in this case, since the government gave them a subsidy, the population was even greater than it would have been had they lived solely on the

produce of the chase. In the Hudson's Bay Territory, there are ten square miles to each individual. In Patagonia, there are *sixty-eight square miles to each*. 'Population, indeed, invariably increases with civilisation. The uncivilised parts of Mexico contained 374,000 inhabitants in 675,000 square miles; while Mexico Proper, with 833,600 square miles, had 6,691,000 inhabitants! Lombardy has (or had) 280 inhabitants to each square mile; England, 280; and Belgium, as many as 320. . . . Moreover, although there is, of course, some exceptional distress, the more densely peopled countries are exactly those in which it is not only absolutely, but even relatively, more abundant. . . . By Civilisation, a thousand men are enabled to live in plenty where one savage would scarcely find a precarious subsistence.'

The longer the world exists, the better it grows. Not only are 'the Van Diemeners and South Americans to the antiquary what the opossum and the sloth are to the geologist,' affording us an only too probable reflex of the mode of life of our earliest ancestors—for evidently the lowest tribes of existing savages, always assuming the common origin of the human race, must be at least as far advanced as *they* were—but the contrast which their position presents to ourselves, affords to the philanthropist a good and certain hope of the Universal Improvement. The precious stone of Civilisation once dropped into the sea of Humanity, the circles which it creates grow larger and larger, and will (although faintly at first) eventually touch the most distant shores. The contemplation of Savage Life teaches us this above all things, that there is no such thing—when compared with our own in an invidious sense—as the Good Old Times; and we hope and believe that the generations of the Future will have reason to make the same remark.

ADULT EDUCATION.

I AM a middle-aged, philanthropical gentleman, supposed to be fond of ease and committees, which combination, I find, produces the maximum credit of work with the minimum of labour—but this is quite between ourselves. An active man in our parish has contrived or discovered a committee of which all the members in turn are obliged to give a certain number of hours to solitary, inglorious, unreported business. I, a middle-aged philanthropist, at this moment find myself superintending the examination of a number of adults in geography and free-hand drawing. They are sitting immediately before me, in a dimly-lighted National School-room, between nine and ten o'clock P.M., sucking their pens, consulting the ceiling, and generally rubbing out a great deal of something with india-rubber, by way of getting a certificate of credit from the Society of Arts. It is certainly more than I expected when I first attended the committee, and assented to the insertion of my name in the Local Board of St Jude's parish. First, there was a public meeting. No; first, there was a private meeting, at which we all agreed, being friends and neighbours who were bent on getting the thing up, that adults were, not to put too fine a point upon it, grossly ignorant; that boys and girls when they left school ceased to feel much interest in decimals; and that it behoved the friends of progress to counteract this forgetfulness as much as possible by establishing some after-excitement, some preter-pluperfect appetite for

knowledge amongst the scattered and neglected youth who had left the parish school. Well, we agreed to call a meeting. Bills were printed, posted, distributed; some two or three big-wigs of the Society of Arts were advertised to speak; and we had a tolerable gathering of adults to hear about the defect in their education, and the remedies proposed to cure them.

The Local Board resulted from this. I was asked to join it; when, lo! it appeared that a series of examinations, advertised to be held under the auspices of the Board, involved the personal superintendence of the members. 'Mr Blank, said the Honourable Secretary or Vice-president, I forget which, 'can you undertake to be present at the National School on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings next from six till ten?' 'No,' said I. 'But,' replied he, 'we *must* have two members of the Board present during the examination of the candidates, or the examination will be invalid; indeed, they will have to sign a most stringent declaration to that purport;' &c. It resulted in my being fixed for Friday; and here I am. My colleague, Smith, has rebelled, and gone out, and I am (against the letter of the regulations) left alone to superintend free-hand and geography. Thus I find myself impelled to chew the cud of my own examinational experience, and to set down in writing certain reflections thereupon.

Still do I remember the cold, moist, attendant symptoms; the damp depression of the process, and the feverish reaction. Well do I recollect the day in which a man was measured only by his success therein. Well do I recollect the passage of the last, and the relief of thinking: 'I shall have no more to do with this; I shall never be examined again.'

Yes, I question whether the term adult education will ever be applied to anything more than a mere experiment, or at best, sprinkled very thinly over the country, some attempts to tinker up defective educations. When once the scholar has left school, or has come to that age which in his own society and calling marks the passage from learning to working, he will cease to learn from books, at least to any great extent. The powers of his mind are occupied by his business. No trade can be done with the hands alone; unless brains be mixed with the work, it will be worthless; and when a lad has done an attentive, perhaps a thoughtful day's work, he is in no mood to study. Small blame to him—he cannot. Of course, there will be exceptions; there will be men with apprehensive faculties, who hunger after information while the hand-workmen are asleep, and will toil by night and day to rise in the world. But I question whether these men are called out by any special system of adult education. They work their way up, and become famous in spite of hindrance. They educate themselves. Very possibly, some famous future engineer or lawyer will avail himself of the present facilities afforded for the education of adults; but as no one but a genius could ever overtop his fellows, in spite of early neglect, we may be sure that such a genius would find food for his mind in a highly civilised country without any special facilities.

At any rate, the schools, classes, examinations, &c. which are established confessedly for adults, will be used less to correct a defective, than to continue a promising education. They will produce no great lights, but they will probably keep some

wicks burning longer than they would if they had been moved from the favourable air of the school-room to the cold wind of the outer world. Some lads will be able to fix the feeble impression they received when they were in the daily class, and deepen the marks of the master's graving-tool. But, as I said, if they are heartily at work in some profession or trade, it is little energy which they can give to the acquisition of fresh learning. The world itself is, no doubt, a school, and many are the whippings we get in it; but it is a school which takes up all your day, and when you have got clear of the shop or the office, you may only think yourself happy if you have not got some extra work to do out of hours. We go at such a terrible pace now, that any system of adult education is a system for the education of those who are really not filling the place of adults. The real adults have their nose to the wheel with too constant and wearisome a sense that it is grinding them slowly away, to retain either any heart to play at being scholars, or hope that they can really learn much. Here, in this parish, there is a population of between thirty and forty thousand. We have had our public meeting, we have distributed bills by the hundred, and though there must be large numbers who are conscious of defective education, I may say that none come forward. What is this small party now sucking its pens and consulting the ceiling? Why, half of them are pupil-teachers, creatures who are fed on ink and slate-pencils; who live to be examined, and whose impersonation of all wisdom and power is Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools. Subtract them from the small gathering present, and the residue represents all who care to make up for past neglect on their own part, or enforced deprivation of school-learning, among thousands of lads who have read our placards and handbills.

I believe adult or semi-adult education answers better in the country. There, the pace is not so killing. Here, when the day's work is done, the lad seeks some recreation, wholesome or otherwise. And any institute for youths will be found to need a large mixture of amusement with the instruction which it professes to give. The night-schools, indeed, are generally frequented by those whom no stretch of imagination could be made to call adults. They are still children, in situations, it may be, or if not, of an age to have left the National School, taken away by their parents before their time, and sent to work by day, and to school at night. But these little dogs do not work: they play marbles by the way, they evade the consciousness of labour by the most successful powers of abstraction. They contrive to retain abundant energy in the intervals of their employment. They whistle in the streets; they mock humanity in all its stages and phases; and when they come into the night-school, they bring an atmosphere of unconsumed vivacity which shews that they are far from appreciating the anxiety of any life which can be called adult.

This paper was begun, as stated, while I was looking after a desful of lads who represented all the appetite for instruction called out by our announcement of examinations. Some time has passed since that evening when my colleague left me, a solitary member of our Board, to discharge its duties at the National School-room, between eight and ten p.m. on Friday night. Seeing how

little effect was likely to be produced by our efforts, I shortly withdrew from the Board, and others have done the same. The thing has failed, and my predictions are fairly fulfilled.

Since then, I have pondered much on the fact that our attempt revealed great defects in national education. If that were what it should be, we either should not have needed the incentive of a certificate of competency which was offered by our Board, or lads, feeling that they had got a good education in schools, would have come forward for examination, that they might get an additional order of merit. As it was, they were too backward either to be warmed to make efforts to retrieve lost ground, or to get a certificate without fresh exertions to qualify them for it.

Now, I am not going to weary my readers with an elaborate essay on education; but still it would be well if we should ask ourselves sincerely what education is, and what it is for? Education is the educating something—we will call it the latent powers of humanity, or that which humanity is *en rapport* with, and we have only a lifetime for life and life's work. The business of education is supposed to be done before the subject is set to take his place in the mill of the world. True, some are children throughout, but ordinary childhood is the time for education, and thus we must admit the fact, that when once a person is out in the world, he has little time for that education which is distinct from the educating influence of life. Here, then, arises the debated question, as to how and what we should teach the children of the people.

And whatever may be settled, whatever may come out of the pot which is now on the legislative fire, whatever *form* the lessons may take, there is but one principle at the bottom of all; that is, to strive to put a key into the scholar's hand, and shew him how to use it. It may be a very small key, or a very common-place key; it may be like the key of a kitchen, or a cupboard, but the thing is to communicate something which can be easily used, not treasured up, not held out for admiration, but used. To put the principle in other words: no education is worth a snap of the fingers which does not set up an action, which does not kindle the material in the scholar's brain or mind. Lessons ought to be like lucifers, little crackling things perhaps to listen to, but capable of putting fire into the grate. If they are merely pictures of a blaze, or reflected flashes like those from a looking-glass, they make a display while they are being applied; but when they are ended, the dull matter in the scholar's brain remains as dull as ever.

One man may throw brilliant flashes of his own wit among his scholars, and effect nothing; the scholars are bright while he shines among them; but directly he and they are parted, they remain the same as they were before, dull and cold. Another makes no great display, but sets the wheels of the scholar's mind in action. He communicates fire, and then the fire may be left to burn of itself. It may need fresh coal and an occasional poking, but the fire is there. As the scholar learns facts and gains experience in life, so such action as his education may have set up finds more fuel. The right early training lasts throughout. He lives and learns, but he learns only as he has been educated; as the perceptive and assimilating powers of his mind are set to work.

Here is the great principle which underlies all education, whatever form it may take; here is the great thing to be remembered when we talk, as we all of us do, more or less, about the education of the people, which is one of the great questions, if not the greatest question of the day.

The instruction of adults, the feeding of them with scholastic pap, may be useful to some who have been badly nursed, but it will never be much more than a standing protest against the defective education of the young.

LORD ULSWATER.

CHAPTER XV.—MR MARSH AT HOME.

CAVENDISH TERRACE, Shelton-on-Sea, is perhaps the most ambitiously designed of all the rows of dwellings in that watering-place. Its noble mansions, as they were described in the printed prospectus of the speculative builder who planned them, towered majestically above the vulgar roofs on either hand. Even the Georgian glories of the Marine Parade, where royal Dukes and Serene Highnesses had once been harboured in stuffy little bow-windowed rooms—even those quasi-historic glories paled before the stucco-splendour of the Terrace. As for York Crescent, Clarence Villas, Albert Square, and the rest, they were no more to be compared with Cavendish Terrace than dwarfs to a giant. The noble mansions boasted of a most extensive frontage, and a grand sea-view. They had great plate-glass windows, heavy balconies, front-doors that were approached by a profusion of unnecessary stone steps, and shaded by useless Corinthian columns, much mock stone-carving in the shape of pilasters and cornices, and a perfect rabbit-warren of bedrooms.

The Terrace might have been an ornament to Utah instead of to Shelton-on-Sea, or it might have been erected by an architect strong in the Mormon faith, and anticipating the conversion of Britain to Mormon principles, so much did the number of dormitories exceed the imaginable requirements of a single family. There were windows, windows everywhere, from where the glass of the basement glared up at foot-passengers, up to the attic casements, glistening, like aly eyes, among the slates of the roof. Tall, drab-coloured, and rectangular, the huge houses stared gauntly forth upon strand and sea, like a block of highly-ornamented barracks.

Pride, however, as the proverb teaches us, will have a fall, and the pride of Cavendish Terrace, figuratively speaking, had sustained a very severe fall indeed. The speculation had been a failure, like most of its brotherhood of hollow, overgrown shams. The tall houses, mortgaged before they were half built, re-mortgaged during the process of roofing them in, built and fitted up on credit, or with borrowed capital, had changed owners half-a-dozen times by means of foreclosure, compromise, private contract, and public auction. Each of the noble mansions might have passed for the tombstone of a small fortune buried in its unremunerative construction. There was indeed a ghastly, funeral air about the Terrace, due, perhaps, to the fact, that the sub-contractors, working on the admirable principle of low tenders and 'scamped' work, had made free use of green wood, deliquescent plaster, and refuse bricks. The stucco of the frontage had peeled off here and there,

showing streaks of discoloured wall beneath, like a wrinkled old face peering out through cracks in its enamel; the columns and steps were often crazy, the roofs unsound, the window and door frames warped and leaky, and the whole house a Temple of the Winds.

With all this, Cavendish Terrace was not allowed to go to utter ruin. The first two or three batches of owners having lost their money upon it, it had now come, pretty cheaply, into the hands of small local capitalists—the brewer, the leading tradesman, and the richest of the attorneys of Shelton. These new proprietors knew how to make the pretentious pile pay fairly well. They could not, indeed, find tenants of the opulent class for whose accommodation the houses were first designed, that is, not permanent tenants. But six of the eight dwellings were inhabited by hard-working, anxious-eyed women, harpies to their lodgers, but to their employers as useful as are fishing-cormorants to the Chinese; and in the bathing-season a few short weeks brought in a tremendous rent, which permitted the property to lie fallow for the rest of the year, not unprofitably on the whole. The other two of the noble mansions were let unfurnished, Number seven to the Misses Buckram, principals of Cavendish Ladies' College, who resembled the great lexicographer, according to the elder Boswell, in keeping a school under a finer name; and Number eight to Stephen Marsh, M.R.C.S.

Mr Marsh was at home, albeit the dining-room in which he and his wife habitually spent their hours of domestic calm, was not a very homelike-looking apartment. After all, the creation of a home depends on subjective gifts, not on objective ones. Many a very poor cottage, many a tenement in the narrow back-lanes of Shelton-on-Sea, realised the home idea far more vividly than Mr Marsh's noble mansion had ever done. The house, or, more correctly, a portion of it, had been expensively furnished, by the joint help of credit and of the money that the surgeon had mysteriously acquired when first he caused his brand-new brass-plate to be screwed upon the front door—expensively, but in the worst possible taste, for the furniture was flashy and tawdry, highly varnished, no doubt, but exactly the sort of furniture that sets forth from the parent warehouse on a principle of limited liability, and succumbs to a few months' wear and tear.

At the same time, it must be owned that Mr Marsh's furniture had not been fairly dealt with. The master of the house drank more than was good for him; the mistress was a slatternly, peevish woman; the servants ill-chosen, unpaid, and looked after not at all; and the children under no more discipline than if they had been so many Bashi Bazouks. Also Mr Marsh's worldly goods had been twice taken in execution for shop-debts or arrears of rent, and once absolutely carted off to a broker's, whence they had been ransomed by some supply of ready cash, to get which Mrs Marsh had gone down on her knees to her brother at the old farm—her brother, who had forbidden Stephen Marsh to darken his doors, but who relented this once at the spectacle of his sister's sore distress.

There, however, in the dining-room of the noble mansion, surrounded by rickety furniture, weak in its casters, damaged as to its veneering—surrounded also by headless horses, broken-nosed dolls, and other battered toys—by garish new pictures, the raw bright colours of which glared out of the gilt

frames like signboards wet from Dick Tinto's brush—by a bruised copper coal-skuttle, a meerschau pipe as brown as nicotine could make it, a litter of books, and feminine wearing-apparel more or less incomplete, a cigar-box, a skull, a heap of articles 'too numerous to be mentioned,' and a starved canary crying shrilly, in bird-language, for food and water, from behind the tarnished wires of his neglected cage, sat Stephen Marsh, Mary Ann his wife, and the two elder children.

The Member of the College of Surgeons was in dressing-gown and slippers; no coquettish morning-robe of velvet and gold, no Turkish papouches heavy with embroidery, such as the hero of a Hay-market novel might wear, but a shabby brown shawl dressing-gown, and the common buff slippers that were sold, at vile price, along with children's wooden sand-spades, at the door of the local bazaar. With his drooping head, his ruffled black hair, and the dull glimmer of his shallow eyes, the disreputable practitioner might have been at least a first-cousin to one of the poor draggled vultures eating out their own hearts (in default of the liver of Prometheus) in their cages at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park.

And yet the occupant of Number eight Cavendish Terrace was for the moment free from care, and in a sort of pseudo-prosperity that extorted reluctant civilities from erst growling shopkeepers. The surgeon—no one knew how—had suddenly come into the possession of enough money to pay the more pressing of the claims upon him, in whole or in part. Also, another gleam of prosperity, from another quarter, had let in a moderate amount of social sunshine to diversify the saddened, sullen, brooding gloom of his profitless life. An old chum of his, who had known him, and liked him well when the twain were Burschen at a High-German university, amid gaudy caps, white beer-mugs, porcelain pipes, crooked sabres, scarred faces, and the peculiar gabble of the student tribe, half pedantic, half poetic, wholly boyish, had wished to do Stephen Marsh a good turn. He, the friend, was now a thriving doctor in one of the very few sugar-producing colonies that pay their way royally, and he had offered to send over two young colonists, sons of rich men, who would willingly pay a thumping premium to Mr Marsh for the privilege of learning the art of healing. What a chance for a lean surgeon, out of elbows, out of character, was here presented!

But Mr Marsh was sulky in word, and thought, and deed, as he sat, late in the day, blinking at the golden daylight, in dressing-gown and slippers, ill-shaven, ill-washed, unsteady of eye and hand.

'I call it,' he said surlily—'I call it cursed impertinence on Brophy's part. What right has he to patronise me, I should like to know, or to presume that his infernal colonial cubs, with their five hundred pounds, would furnish what he calls an acceptable addition to my income? Confound him! I was twice as good a man as he when we were at college—I was a Fox when he was a plain Bursche, and— Hang the brats! what a tease they are; and Miss Buckram's gabies of girls, what a row they make, strum, strum on those brutal jingling pianos, and you—Mary Ann, can't you speak?'

The last words were very querulously uttered. Everything, in truth, vexed the surgeon's shattered nerves, far gone as the man was in drink and irritability. And certainly, through the thin contract-built walls, the noise which Miss Buckram's

pupils made in playing their scales with hesitating fingers, on instruments that might have been supplied by the ironmonger, to judge by their tone, was the reverse of an anodyne. Also the children were clamorous and dirty as to their faces and fingers, and Mrs Marsh was in one of her silent moods, and with her, to be silent meant to be sullen.

'What do you expect me to say?' asked Mrs Marsh, slowly lifting her eyes from the dogs-eared novel, greasy with much thumbing, and sunwarped as to its binding, on which her feeble brains were busy. There are, of course, worse ways of spending time than in the reading of novels; but with the wife of Stephen's bosom, novel-reading was a vice. She had taken to fiction as others take to drink, and ordered incessant stores of Minerva Press literature—no modern tales, but the romances of Mrs Radcliffe, Monk Lewis, and the other Rosicrucians—as drunkards order a dram. The circulating library of Shelton-on-Sea, the subscribers to which grumbled much at the scanty supply of new works concealed in recondite nooks beneath the counter, had yet a large room the shelves of which were furnished with a most wonderful collection of old dusky novels bound in boards; such novels as Lydia Languish caused her maid to purvey for her by armfuls; and on these Mrs Marsh bateden at will. It was an old habit, and it would, after all, have been hard to grudge the poor woman her only pleasure.

'What do you expect me to say?' asked Mrs Marsh sulkily. Most of us can hear, and even heed, in a sort of semi-conscious way, and her mind was not so busy with the Moated Grange, or with the page under the gigantic helmet in the castle-hall of Otranto, but that she was aware of the drift of her husband's discourse. That loving consort gruffly retorted that he expected no sense from her lips, at anyrate, but that he would be glad to know what she thought of the delightful treat of having two conceited young colonial puppies quartered on him, Stephen Marsh, to be taught the healing art.

'You are very civil indeed—you always are. But if you want my opinion, here it is for you,' said Mrs Marsh deliberately from behind her book: 'You ought to be glad of any honest means of paying the butcher and baker—any honest means. And if we could get credit so as to furnish two nice airy bedrooms with a look-out over the sea, and if the young men really pay such a premium, you ought to jump at it, unless you're quite cracked, as I sometimes think.' In explanation of which project, it may be said that not one-fourth part of the noble mansion had been furnished when the surgeon sent in his tawdry chattels. Most of the rooms stood bleak and bare; and it was on this account that Mrs Marsh, with a woman's practical view of affairs, had suggested furnishing two rooms for the expected pupils from hot latitudes.

The lady's advice was good sound counsel, certainly, and yet it had the effect of making her husband more angry than before. There were several reasons for this. The form of Mrs Marsh's speech was not conciliatory; there was a taunt tacked to it; and, worse still, very great stress was laid upon the word 'honest,' which word was repeated. Now, this had reference to bygone but still smouldering quarrels, and, as the surgeon well knew, bore more immediately upon the mysterious sums of money which he had twice obtained, and of the source of which his wife knew no more than

she could glean from the broken utterances that dropped from his lips as he lay sleeping at her side.

But, after all, what annoyed the surgeon most was that the advice was not only rational, but that it agreed with his own secret determination. Headstrong and ill-conditioned as Stephen Marsh might be, he was not mad enough to forfeit such a chance as that which had apparently dawned before him. He meant to take the pupils and the thousand guineas, if only he could get them; but, like a pike that cannot resist the silvery gudgeon that the angler twirls before his shark-like snout, but will not pouch the bait kindly, Mr Marsh desired to be pitied for the prospective good-luck that had befallen him. He broke out roughly: 'You are a fool, Mary Ann. Do you think that I—a man that knows more of anatomy, practically and theoretically, than any six of the pompous old charlatans who get all the fees, and all the praise, and all the good appointments, over the heads of their superiors—that I am going to play bear-leader to a brace of young jackanapes from Demerara or Berbice, or wherever my patron, Brophy, forsooth, chooses to feel the pulses of greater idiots than himself! Sooner than that, I'd'—And here Mr Marsh concluded his harangue, not with any regular peroration, but with a very ugly oath and a very ugly look, supplemented by a spiteful kick, that sent a shabby footstool flying half-way across the frayed carpet, and set the children off crying in concert; but Mrs Marsh not taking up the ball of contention, there was no active war. In the case of this couple, a sort of quietism was setting in, after years of bickering. There were skirmishes still, but not such battles-royal as when, for instance, Mary Ann had fled by night to a friend's house, and from that vantage-ground had obtained the intervention of the Queen's Justices to bind over her Stephen to keep the peace.

Accordingly, the only answer which Mrs Marsh made to her husband's verbal assault was a little sneering laugh, and then the lady returned to the patient perusal of her greasy volume; while the whimpering children resumed their wild sports among the legs of the lame dinner-table. Mr Marsh sneered too, and made some pretence of reading the crumpled medical journal that lay on the table beside him, but presently arose, pushing back his high-backed elbow-chair. 'I shall go out,' said the surgeon, casting a scowling glance at his wife: 'anywhere else than in this doghole of a house, a man can find some peace. I can't stand much more of this chorus of squalling children; and the jangle of those infernal tin-kettles next door would make any person mad—any person with brains enough to go mad, at least,' concluded Mr Marsh savagely. Then he applied himself to exchange his dressing-gown for the black coat that hung on a peg beside the bookcase, and to substitute a pair of boots, that were kept in the lower locker of that glazed receptacle for literature, for the buff slippers that he wore when at home. Large as the noble mansion might be, the long-suffering dining-room where the family usually congregated had to serve many purposes, and it suited Mr Marsh rather to keep his walking attire within its precincts, than to adjourn to his squalid dressing-room up-stairs.

And now Mrs Marsh laid aside her book, with an unpaid bill between its leaves by way of marker, and got up from her chair, chiding the children into temporary silence. Indifferent as she was to her

lord's sarcasms, and deaf as she was to his threats and complaints, she no sooner saw that he was in earnest on the subject of going out, than a change came over her. It was not, indeed, on every day, or even on every fine day, that the surgeon now stirred abroad; often would he pass the whole of the period between breakfast and bedtime in purposeless inaction, without caring to go out.

He was going out now, however; and it was incumbent on Mrs Marsh to hush the children, to close her book, and to devote her energies to the task of 'smartening papa up,' so that he should make a decent show before the world. It was quite quaint, and almost pathetic, to see with what brisk fingers the faded wife assisted in adjusting the tie of her husband's untidy cravat, in brushing his coat, smoothing down the rebellious nap of his cheap hat, and hunting in drawers and hiding-places for a pair of gloves that should be fit for wear. The exertion brought a little colour into her pale cheeks, and a little light into her dull eyes. Her manner grew almost tender as, with womanly deftness, she put the final artistic touches to her work—tender enough, at anyrate, to suggest the idea that, married to a better man, Mary Ann Marsh, *née* Hogben, might have been a better woman.

And so Stephen Marsh was made presentable; and so, thankless for the unasked help that his wife had afforded him in the beautifying process, the gloomy surgeon took a cursory glance at his appearance in the blotched mirror over the mantel-piece, settled his hat upon his head, and shutting the front-door after him with a bang, sallied forth.

CHAPTER XVI.—MR MARSH ABROAD.

In a little place like Shellton-on-Sea, every one is known, more or less, with such particulars with respect of income, antecedents, character, and conduct, as those wildest and stanchest of all public providers of news, the male and female gossips of a watering-place, can collect. Mr Marsh, albeit no native, and not indeed a very old inhabitant of the bathing-town, was very well known by sight and by repute to the larger portion of his neighbours. But though people stared at him from the other side of the street, or nudged one another and whispered as he came up the Parade, it was surprising to see how few were his acquaintance, and how shy were the Shelltonians of acknowledging his presence by bow or word. Certainly the men who drew the Bath-chairs gave him a grudging salute; and a few of the smaller shopkeepers, hurrying through the streets with light parcels of goods for valued customers who declined to wait until that almost mythical lad, 'our errand-boy,' should have concluded his game at marbles or leap-frog, made him a quick cringing bow of recognition.

But Mr Marsh remembered with bitterness that these very men had been the most eager of the pack of suspicious creditors that bayed at his heels, and threatened to drag him down, but a little while ago, and before his late windfall of ready money had enabled him to stave off the demands of those whom he honoured with his custom; and he well knew that the principal tradesmen of the place, less rancorous against him in his insolvency, it may be, were more firm in their bad opinion of him as a rogue in grain. As for the Upper Five Hundred of the place, the would-be fashionable doctor might indeed have been under a cloud, like Diomedes before Troy, for aught that they seemed

to see of him as he half slunk, half swaggered past them. From the windows of Marine Parade houses, unfriendly eyes espied the surgeon as he went by, and tongues wagged against him as the wretch who supplanted his benefactor, beat his wife, neglected his children—the wretch who was known or supposed to have all the seven deadly sins, supplemented by the eighth crime of staying away from church, on his seared conscience.

This was no novelty: he had expected nothing better; and yet it cut him to the heart every time that the reality of it was revived. In vain he sneered and frowned, and bore his head high, and shot dark glances at the groups of those who had been his patients when he was a mere assistant to old Dennis, but who refused to know the tenant of Number eight Cavendish Terrace. In vain he told himself, what was perfectly true, that on grounds of pure intellect he was superior to most, on grounds of acquired information to perhaps all, of those who now cut him so remorselessly. He was really an astute and learned man, had received a good education, and had capped it by deep reading and deep thought; and there had been a time when ladies had pronounced Dr Dennis's assistant a delightful young doctor, and when old gentlemen had deigned to chat with him at library-doors or on the jetty where the band played. But now, when Stephen Marsh approached, those very ladies became suddenly engrossed in the seaward prospect, or the children's perambulators, or the very pebbles at their feet; and the red-faced, old, half-pay colonels and majors, stupid, but respectable, passed him by with stolid indifference.

Mr Marsh had associates still, but they were night-birds, and they avoided the daylight and the open places in front of the sea, to come forth at dusk, as owls do, and talk and smoke in public-house parlours. There he was a man of some distinction still, as a scholar and a member of one of the learned professions, but none of these tavern-haunters were abroad among the innocent promenaders on whom the surgeon gazed so resentfully.

Officers of regiments and dépôts quartered in out-of-the-way places are seldom very niggardly of their acquaintance, and the officers stationed at Shellton had formerly been hand-in-glove with Mr Marsh. This, however, was at an earlier period of his Decline and Fall, when he was both more sober and more neat in his personal appearance than in these latter days. He had not then been excluded from the mess-room, but by degrees even his accomplishments—for he was an admirable billiard-player, could fence, sing a good song, and play on several instruments with true German taste and accuracy—could not float him in military society. One by one, his friends dropped him as a drunken fellow, who ought not to be seen speaking to a gentleman. So now the bluff jolly captains, and the candid ensigns, with their pink, smooth faces, and the elder subalterns, with accurately trimmed moustaches, and hairy terriers trotting at their heels, got out of Mr Marsh's way, or stared straight before them, as if they saw him not. All things considered, the doctor's afternoon stroll must have been more prolific in sour than in sweets.

'It is his fault—it is all his fault: but for him, I should not be here!' Thus to himself spoke Mr Marsh; and as he tramped along, looking curses at the Matresfamilias gathering up their brood around them, as a sort of body-guard against the wicked surgeon's baleful approach; at the military

saunterers in gray suits or Cochín-China coats; at the local he-aristocracy old and young; at the misses, with elaborate *chignons* and gay little hats—as he thus tramped along, a mental photograph of Lord Ulswater, splendidly strong, and insolently handsome, rose up before him. 'It is all his fault,' snarled out Mr Marsh, as he got beyond the foot-walk of the regular parade, past the posts and chains, and the black jetty running out into the sea, and the last bathing-machine, and found himself on a narrow strip of shingly ground, where the cliff encroached steeply upon the beach.

The promenaders, one and all, turned back, invariably, before reaching this strip of Debatable Land between the white cliff and the rough sea; and only a few roving urchins, or a coast-guard mariner with his glass to his eye, or a washerwoman pressed for space to dry visitors' clothes in the crowded summer season, frequented the spot; yet there, when Mr Marsh turned into its uninviting borders, were two men, walking together, with slow tread, the loose shingle crackling harshly beneath their feet.

Ill-matched companions, those two, as they appeared when Mr Marsh first desecrated them. The elder was a tall, a very tall old man, who, to judge by his inches, might have been a strapping grenadier in his youth. His shambling gait and abject bearing, however, were the reverse of soldierly; and as he crawled and writhed along the narrow pathway, his bent back, and stooped head, and rounded shoulders, seemed to be apologising in dumb-show to the world at large for their owner's presumption in venturing to be so very tall. This meek creature, long-bodied and grizzle-headed, was clad in a suit of spongy cloth of that negative hue known as 'pepper and salt'; and he had square-toed shoes, and stockings of gray worsted; a dull, woolly textured hat, on the dim surface of which no brushing and smoothing of a caressing hand could produce a glimmer of polish; a wisp of a black neckcloth; and very conspicuous pewter buttons, as bright as friction and rottenstone could render them. These habiliments might at first sight have been mistaken for a livery; but the most economical member of the Manchester school would hardly have put a servant into such a costume as that which the old man wore: there was no band of gold, silver, or white around the woolly hat; no crest upon the buttons, not so much as a cipher. And yet it was a livery, for all that—the livery of Poverty as by vestry vote appointed. As the wearer drew near, the surgeon might, had he pleased, have read the capital letters S. P. worked in white upon the collar and cuffs of the pepper-and-salt coat. S. P. stood for Shellton Parish, and the old man was a pauper, clothed, lodged, and nourished in the hospitable workhouse of that town, in which he held, indeed, some subordinate office, such as paupers, for indirect wages in the shape of perquisites or favour, are permitted to fill.

But Mr Marsh knew the wearer of the coat, and the coat itself, a great deal too well for it to be necessary that he should trouble himself in deciphering the purport of the embroidered initials with which Bumbleton badges the raiment of Want. His curiosity was excited by the younger man of the two, a burly, thick-set fellow, bandy-legged, bull-necked, with a flat face, beetling brows, and the hair closely cropped upon a head that was as round as a bullet. A sturdy, formidable figure, dressed in dusty slop-shop clothes of a yellow

white, such as navvies wear in hot weather, and with a blue bird's-eye handkerchief twisted around his collarless neck. His heavy ankle-boots kicked the pebbles savagely to right and left, as he walked moodily along beside the old man; and he looked by no means the sort of wayfarer whom a nervous gentleman, if benighted, would care to encounter in the middle of a dark lane. Such a face withal, lowering, defiant, resentful, a face which in its dull but menacing discontent resembled that of a fierce overdriven bull.

Nearer and nearer yet, and now, strange to say, Mr Marsh began to distinguish a likeness between those two faces, that in lineaments and expression were so unlike. Though the senior had a long nose, hooked and high-bridged, a forehead high and narrow, cheek-bones high and sharp, small eyes placed very near to the fleshy beak of a nose, and a mouth as mean as the eyes; while the junior's scarred countenance was that of a sulky mastiff, bluff and grim, there was a likeness between them after all.

The tall old pauper took off his hat with a cringing bow as he met the surgeon—for this appointment of workhouse medical officer was the only piece of paid professional employment, it may be remembered, remaining to Mr Marsh, and he lost by it, chary as he was of expensive drugs—but the strong man beside him stared rudely in Mr Marsh's face, and kept his pipe between his lips, and his greasy cap untouched upon his head, as he paced on. Mr Marsh said nothing; he nodded and frowned, but there was something in his eye which the old man, with an instinct born of servility and his long habit of watching the eyes of his superiors, interpreted correctly enough. He answered it, however, by nothing but another humble twitch at the brim of his woolly hat, and slunk on, crouching, at the side of his broad-shouldered companion. Mr Marsh sat himself down upon a broken windlass that had drawn up bathing-machines in what were called the palmy days of Shellton-on-Sea, when royal dukes were not quite so scarce on its parade as the Dinornis in New Zealand, and waited. He had not to wait long. He saw the two figures come to a halt just where a lane that skirted some stabling afforded a short-cut to the poorer and more crowded portion of the town; there was evidently a brief debate, and then the younger of the men disappeared in the shadow of the lane, and the old man, as Mr Marsh had expected, came shambling back alone.

The woolly hat came fairly off the grizzled head this time, as its wearer ducked and bent his limber spine before the darkling surgeon.

'Hope I see you well, Mr Marsh, sir!' said the pauper, with an abject smile. He said no more, but stood fawningly waiting for the other to speak; and as he towered over the surgeon seated on the windlass, he bore an odd resemblance to the stork in *Æsop* when perplexed how to dip his long bill in the fox's platter.

'Huller!' said Mr Marsh, after a pause, 'who was that fellow I met you with? That son of yours, eh?—Don't lie, sir!' he added, very severely, for he saw by the old man's false smile and shifting eye that he was seeking to evade the question.

'Why, yes, I must own to it, sir. My son William, sir, poor fellow—it was him certainly. No offence, sir. Begging you to excuse the feelings of a father that once knew better days, and'—

Here Mr Huller was interrupted.

'Hark you, you precious old humbug, don't try it on with me,' said Mr Marsh roughly; 'I know all about you and your better days. Usher in a school, singer in a choir first, and then in a tap-room, bonnet at a gambling-house, tavern-waiter in the Haymarket, tub-preacher, begging-letter writer, book-keeper to an omnibus proprietor, thimble-rigger, billiard-marker, photographer's tout—such, with intervals of tread-mill and oakum-picking, and perhaps some minor vagabondage that I forget, out of all you told me in your drunken confidences, you tipsy old sinner—those are your better days, and that is a fair sketch of your career—is it not?'

Mr Marsh's manner had quite altered; his eye was stern, and his voice as hard as if he had been a French Procureur or an old-world Inquisitor. The tall old pauper wriggled and abased himself before his cruel questioner. The ready tears rose to his eyes.

'Too true, sir; and it has brought me to this,' answered Huller; and as he pointed to the workhouse mark upon the cuff of his pepper-and-salt coat, a drop or two fell from the old man's eyes upon the sleeve of that eleemosynary garment. Tears of regret, at any rate, possibly of shame or of remorse; or they may have been the mere product of agitation, acting on a frame soddened by such a limited quantity of strong-waters, swallowed in secret, as a pauper official can get by fair means or foul; and certainly the orbits of Mr Huller's eyes were very red, and his lip and hand unsteady, and there was a slight perfume of gin that clung to him like an alcoholic atmosphere.

'Then don't try to humbug me,' said Mr Marsh, shaking a threatening forefinger at his aged acquaintance. 'Your son, William, is the chap that was transported, wasn't he?'

'He was—in trouble, sir,' said the father, coughing with humility behind his hand.

'Garrotting, eh?' demanded Mr Marsh curtly.

Huller coughed again, and was compelled to admit that his offspring's quarrel with the law had been on account of 'something of that sort.'

'Then, has he worked his time out? Has he a ticket-of-leave, or is he an escaped convict?' succinctly inquired the surgeon.

The pauper's pliant spine was bowed still lower, and his bony hands were rubbed together, as he deferentially answered that his 'boy' had been liberated 'for good.'

'For a strange sort of "good," judging by his looks,' said Mr Marsh sneeringly. 'Now, what is he doing here? Don't shuffle or equivocate; don't lie. If you talk to me of hay, and harvest, and hop-picking, of course I shall know you lie. Why is he here?'

Thus adjured, Huller *père* urbanely informed Mr Marsh that Shellton was his son's native place, as well as his own; that Bill had come down from London, finding work slack, to—to see his old father, and to—to see whether his parent could suggest to him any available means of gaining a livelihood, or'—

'Yes, I see—put him up to a "plant," you mean,' broke in Mr Marsh with a contemptuous grin. He had narrowly watched the old man's face, knowing how hard it is for a liar to lie with a pair of hostile eyes fixing his own; and he knew that the pauper had spoken truth, or such an approach to truth as those gin-scented lips could frame. Yes, that was true, no doubt. The old man had been but a timid knave, too fearful to

make a bold stroke; but his ruffianly son doubtless was aware that his parent's brains were far better than his—that accounted for all.

'Now, Huller, my man,' said Mr Marsh rising, 'of course I shall say nothing to the authorities up there—jerk his thumb to indicate the workhouse—of the very objectionable company in which I found you. But there are two things on which I insist—first, you must let me know when your son leaves the place; and secondly, while he stays, you must keep sober. When you drink—to excess, I mean—your tongue gets loosened, and I don't choose that your engaging son should know anything of the slight service you rendered me some few years since; you understand?'

Yes, fawning Huller understood. He wished, or at least he said so, that he might be struck dead if he blabbed a word that might vex his generous patron. And would Mr Marsh kindly condescend—an old man wanted many little comforts which a workhouse did not supply? Whereupon, Mr Marsh, with a very bad grace, gave Huller a sovereign, and the interview ended.

'That fellow may be useful. Who knows? He would cut a throat for small pay, or I have studied Lavater to little purpose.' Thus ran the stream of Mr Marsh's thoughts, as he strode homewards. 'I must work with such tools as I can get. So much the worse for him, if he drives me to use them.' And he smiled a grim smile, that was worse, and more wicked, than a frown.

What were Huller's meditations, it matters little; but he, too, slunk away with an evil smile upon his face; in his case, rather a smile of cunning than of resentment. 'Pretty nearly dry,' he chuckled to himself, as he felt, with loving touch, the sovereign in the left-hand pocket of his pepper-and-salt waistcoat. 'When the lemon's quite dry, we shall try a new game, doctor!'

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

ASTRONOMERS are making preparations to observe the annular (or ring-formed) eclipse of the sun, which is to take place on the 6th March. It will begin at Greenwich at seventeen minutes past eight in the forenoon, and end at eight minutes to eleven, and at the time of greatest obscuration, about seven-tenths of the sun's diameter will be hidden; consequently, there will be much darkness. The complete ring will be first seen at Madeira, whence the path of the eclipse will skirt North-western Africa, cross Southern Italy, Dalmatia, Bosnia, South-eastern Transylvania, across Russia between Moscow and Kazan, to Siberia, where, on the shores of the Yenisei, it approaches the Polar Circle, and comes to an end. This eclipse is regarded with the more interest by astronomers, as it is the last of the annular form which will be visible for most part of Europe during the present century. It is to be hoped that the day will be clear, and the atmosphere favourable to observation of the interesting phenomenon.

Further progress has been made with the experiments for relieving Swansea and its neighbourhood of the noxious cloud of copper-smoke under which it has so long suffered; and it is now demonstrated on a large scale that the smoke can be condensed into oil of vitriol, and prevented from escaping

into the atmosphere. If all the copper-smelters will follow the example set by Mr Vivian, to whose persevering endeavours this happy result is due, the country round about Swansea will recover its verdure, trees will cease to lose their leaves in the deadly fumes, and the health of the community will be improved; and as oil of vitriol is an important article in commerce, and in the preparation of mineral fertilisers, the copper-masters will have an additional source of profit.

Some months ago, we noticed Mr Graham's *dialysis*, a new chemical process for separating substances held in solution from one another. Since then, the suggestion has been made, that this process may be advantageously employed to detect cases of poisoning. For instance, the stomach or intestines of a person supposed to have died of poison might be tied at their extremities, and placed in a vessel of water, when the poison, if any, would dialyse through the coats of the stomach or intestines, and pass into the water, where of course it would become subject to examination. That this can be done without disturbing the contents of the parts experimented on, is an advantage which law as well as science will be able to turn to account.

At a recent meeting of the Photographic Society, Mr England read a paper *On the Preservation, Restoration, and Perfecting of Negatives*, which ought to command the attention of photographers everywhere, for it treats of one of the most important questions regarding their art. He shews them that unless some special pains are taken, the photographic specimens of the present period will entirely disappear, and be lost to future generations. That photographs will and do fade, is well known; but what is worse is that negatives also perish, through the cracking of the thin film of varnish with which they are covered. Ingenious attempts have been made to fill the cracks, but without any permanent success. If a varnish could be found that would contract and expand with the changes of temperature of the glass-plate, then there would be no cracks. Mr England believes that he has found such a varnish, or rather a means of preservation; namely, a solution of india-rubber of the consistency of treacle, which is to be poured on a plate prepared and varnished in the usual way. The india-rubber appears to penetrate the varnish, to give it elasticity, and to render it so impervious to damp, that a negative may be soaked in water twenty-four hours without injury. This remedy is so simple, that we should think photographers will gladly adopt and seek to confirm it by persevering experiment.

In the last published part of *Transactions of the Entomological Society*, an account is given of the alarming ravages of a small slender species of ant, introduced into St Helena from the west coast of Africa about twenty years ago. James Town is described as 'devastated' by this destructive insect; all the wood-work of the cathedral, of the library, and indeed of the whole town, has been devoured. In their feast of the books, it was noticed that the insects first attacked theological works, probably because they were less disturbed than works of light literature. 'The only wood which they do not eat is teak, but they will bore through it to get at other wood suited to their tastes which may happen to be placed behind it. Even tin cases are no protection if they become spotted with rust, for the ants at once force an entrance at the spots, and devour the contents. At present, their ravages are

confined to James Town; but if not checked, they may ere long spread over the whole island. The government are greatly embarrassed to find a way of putting a stop to the destruction, which has occasioned already a loss of some thousands of pounds; and any one who could suggest a remedy would confer an essential benefit on the inhabitants of St Helena.

We learn from the same periodical that, notwithstanding the wind and wet of last summer and autumn, the attempts made to feed and rear silk-worms on the aïlanthus-tree were not unsuccessful. Certain individuals have formed what they call an 'aïlanthery,' so as to afford the worms the best possible chance of thriving. If the coming summer should prove fine, we may perhaps hear of more favourable results. In the mountain-forests of China, the swarms of silk-worms are so great, that the silk produced would yield twelve thousand bales a year if brought into the market, besides one hundred thousand pieces of silk stuffs woven by the natives.

As the time of budding and blossoming is coming on, we make known a simple means of preserving trees from the ravages of insects, which was first published at Lyon by the Imperial Society of Practical Horticulture of the Rhone. The mischief done by insects whose eggs are deposited in buds and blossoms is almost incredible. The remedy is to mix one part of vinegar with nine parts of water, and shower it from a syringe or fine-rosed watering-pot over the trees, plants, or flowers requiring protection. The experiments made in this way in the neighbourhood of Lyon have proved eminently successful, the trees so treated having been loaded with fruit, while others which had been let alone bore very scantily. In preparing the solution, it would be well to remember that as French vinegar is much stronger than English, the quantity of the latter should be increased. Another useful remedy for preventing ants and other insects from crawling up the stems of trees, is to expose lamp-oil for three or four days to the sun till it becomes thick and gummy, and smells disagreeably, then to use it as paint with a small brush, and draw a belt round the stems of the trees about two inches wide, and two feet from the ground. A fresh coat must be put on day by day for four days, when, if no breaks are left, it will effectually prevent the ascent of insects.

As is well known, there are many towns and villages in different parts of the kingdom which would be glad to have a railway, if it could be constructed at moderate cost. The cheapest way would be to make use of the existing roads, and this is what Mr Page proposes to do in a scheme which he has recently made public. To insure safety as much as possible, his locomotives would run on rails of creosoted wood, and be provided with guide-wheels, each having an independent axle. These guide-wheels and the carriages would run on light iron rails laid outside the wooden rails; and with this combination there would be but little danger of running off at curves, or of coming to a stand-still at moderate slopes. If, as proposed, the old turnpike roads and parish roads could be made use of, there would be no outlay for land; and with careful supervision, many branch-railways might be made which would yield a profit, and serve as feeders to the main lines. In the colonies too, and in India, where readiness of communication is urgently required, a good opportunity is afforded

for trying Mr Page's railway. The cost of a few miles might be included in the grand estimate of £20,000,000 which the Indian government talk of introducing for public improvements.

The great telegraph line which the Russians and Americans conjointly are making to connect New York with St Petersburg, is now so far advanced that only 850 miles more are required to complete it from the North Pacific to Peking. From San Francisco, which has for some years been in telegraphic communication with New York, the wires are to be carried up to Behring's Strait, and there cross to the Asiatic side. When finally completed, it will not be difficult to establish connections with the principal cities of the East and of Europe; and in this way the keen traders of the commercial metropolis of the United States will get up an active competition with the telegraphers of this side the Atlantic. It would perhaps be safe to predict, as one result of this competition, that before many years are over, messages will be flashed all round the globe.

We have on various occasions mentioned the praiseworthy operations of Dr Müller, the government botanist at Melbourne, and we have now the pleasure to make known that he has raised a large number of cinchona-trees (Peruvian bark), and plants of ginger and arrow-root, as well as others of much value in commerce, with the intention to form plantations of the whole number on suitable parts of the mountain-slopes of the colony of Victoria. We heartily wish him success, for these are things which benefit a community in more ways than that of trade.

THE CLOUDS.

DARK and heavy-bosomed Clouds,
Leaning on the streams of wind,
Pressing on in frowning crowds,
Throgs before and throgs behind,
Sweep the high and empty air!
Rock nor barrier rises there.

O descend not for the bird
That delights to ride the waves!
Have ye not already heard
Of those black and whirling graves,
Seas on gallant vessels piled,
Screams of fear and sorrow wild?

O'er the deep mid-ocean parts,
Many a son and father sails;
Isle and Continent have hearts
Anxious at the growing gales.
Chain those mighty reckless wings
Which the flying Tempest swings!

Change and lie in softer light;
Drop the glittering rainbow showers;
Bring again the snowdrops white,
Maiden heralds of the flowers;
Let the Spring with happy eyes
See her own bright suns arise!

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